

FCESS SIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM REPORT



Prepared By

New Hampshire
FAMILY VOICES®



Methodology:

A consultant was hired to interview families who had participated in the Family Centered Early Supports and Services (FCESS) Family Sign Language program. The interviews were conducted by an objective 3rd party consultant and entered into a survey monkey format for analysis by staff at NH Family Voices. Of the 19 families in the program 13 attempted to participate in a phone interview. One family attempted to complete the phone interview but due to a crying child was unable to complete the interview. Attempts to connect at a later time were unsuccessful. Twelve families completed the interviews.

The twelve families who completed the surveys were from six regions of the state. To honor family right to privacy we have chosen not to identify specific numbers per region or regions. It is believed that level of information may jeopardize family anonymity.

Demographics

Questions 1 through 4 were specific to personally identifiable child information and are not being shared in this report.

Access

In questions 5 when asked who referred families to the Family Sign Language program the answers included Family Centered Early Supports and Services, MICE, NH Playgroup and/or Teacher of the Deaf. Some families indicated more than one person suggested they consider the program. One hundred percent of families indicated in question 6 that the program began when expected. And 100% completed the program in its entirety.

Family/Provider relationship

Questions 7 through 10 were specifically related to family provider relationships. While the majority identified the provider as a good fit for the family, in the instance where this was not so, a new person was assigned as soon as the difficulty was identified. 100% of the family members felt they were provided with objective information, that they were included in the planning of the services they received and ultimately completed all sessions. However there was a comment that the program had a “set agenda”. It’s unclear if this was a reference to a curriculum. What kind of signing the family wanted to use was also identified as an option received by families. Flexibility on behalf of the program to meet family needs and providers’ willingness to educate families on deaf culture were identified by families as being helpful.



Program Operations (questions 11 – 17)

100% of the families responding completed the program within two months. They acknowledged the need to cancel sessions on both their part and the providers nevertheless in 100% of those situations they were able to reschedule. When completing the class 87.5% were offered the opportunity to take session two. 37.5% of the families indicated they went on and completed session #2. Those not going on to step two indicated personal choice, family illness and the need to wait until the child is older as reasons they did not proceed.

First Visit

In question 18 when families were asked to talk about their first visit with the Family Sign Language Program they focused on the provider. Some indicated they were uncomfortable with having to talk to a person who was deaf. They appreciated having an interpreter present for the first visit. One parent indicated she was “terrified” at the thought of not having an interpreter present so was very grateful for that support. Several commented on how good the communication was at the first meeting and they felt it was an opportunity to identify the needs of the family.

When asked in question 19 about their overall experience with the Family Sign Language Program one family felt the first and second session were the same information. Another individuals wanted to learn more sentences as they had learned words on their own through internet searches. There were also responses describing the program as “Phenomenal” and “didn’t really want it to stop”. Families who did not elaborate said the program was either “good” or “great”.



In question 20 when asked about the last visit families responded positively with comments such as “really helpful, especially with relationships,” “Didn’t want it to end, would like 20 more sessions” and “really helpful”. Families were asked what they learned and how did it help or not help their families in questions 21 and 22. Families felt they learned basic words and how to communicate with their child. They appreciated the ability to have anyone they identified attend the sessions and how it has enabled them to communicate with their child and have a better understanding of what it is like to be deaf. One family indicated the program helped them feel more cohesive as a family.

In the final question families were asked if they had any other comments. Families indicated they would like to learn more than “individual words”, expressing a desire to form sentences. There was also concern that the children would lose resources such as playgroup, when their child entered preschool. The primary comment from families was that the program was beneficial to them, their children and extended family.

Overall observations:

Families expressed high praise for the program and its staff. The benefit of having an adult with hearing loss to talk with and ask questions of was substantial. Some families expressed their discomfort and fear at communicating with an adult who had a hearing loss but at the same time appreciated all that they were able to learn from the adult to support their own child’s growth. High praise was given for the support of extended family involvement within

sessions as it enabled communication between the child and multiple family members. Significance of the program within families lives is evidenced by the fact that all 12 families completed the sessions even when rescheduling was necessary. It also didn't matter why the rescheduling was necessary; families were committed to completing all sessions. Families are pleased with the program and were eager for additional assistance.



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